



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2017

No. 49

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 21, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable EVAN H. JENKINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

RELEASE SANDY PHAN-GILLIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, China is illegally imprisoning an American citizen, Mrs. Sandy Phan-Gillis. March 19 marked the 2-year anniversary since Sandy illegally was incarcerated by the Chinese Government.

Sandy is from Houston, Texas. She has lived there for almost 40 years. She worked tirelessly to improve U.S. relations with China. She believed that closer engagement would improve the lives of both Americans and the Chinese.

As a member of the Houston Mayor's International Trade and Development Council, Sandy traveled to China in March 2015 with Houston Mayor Pro Tem Ed Gonzalez. Their purpose was to help a trade mission to promote business between Houston, Texas, and China.

It was on this trip when Sandy was unlawfully arrested by China's State Security. The Chinese accused her of being a spy for the FBI. She was thrown into solitary confinement and subjected to torture and relentless questioning.

Mr. Speaker, there are worldwide horror stories about Chinese prisons. Sandy was hospitalized twice because of the treatment by China's spy agency while she was incarcerated in China.

Sandy suffers from several serious medical conditions. The Chinese threatened to take away her access to medicine, basically threatening to kill her, unless she confessed to being a spy. She even suffered a fear-induced heart attack because of their brutality while she was in custody.

Sandy's false imprisonment is a travesty and a farce.

Here is a photograph of Sandy before she was imprisoned in China.

Her lawyers and her family have never received a copy of the warrants for her detention or her arrest. It took the Chinese over a year while she was in jail before they even charged her with a crime. She was not allowed to speak to a lawyer for over a year.

According to the Chinese Government, Sandy was spying for the FBI back in the nineties—that was over 25 years ago—but the Chinese Government has not been able to provide a scintilla of evidence to back up their outlandish false claims.

The FBI has stated Sandy never, ever has worked for them, and her passport shows that she never traveled to China in the timeframe the Communist State Security accuses her of going on spy

missions in China. In fact, there is documentation proving Sandy was working in Houston, Texas, at the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am a former judge, and I have looked at the evidence in this case. There is no evidence, and she should be released. The Chinese allegations are a total illusion on the part of the Communist government.

Sandy has been denied the basic rights she is entitled to, even under Chinese law and international law. The United Nations has reviewed Sandy's case and determined that she had been arbitrarily arrested and that her rights have been violated. After 2 years in jail, she has not had the chance to have an appearance before a judge.

Sandy spent her entire life trying to improve China's trade relations with the United States, and for her efforts, she was put in jail by the Communist Chinese.

If Sandy isn't safe in China, then no American is. On any given trip, an American citizen like Sandy can be snatched by the Communists and put in jail just on a whim.

Supposedly, the State Department has raised Sandy's case with their Chinese counterparts over 20 times, but more pressure needs to be applied. We know that China is a gross human rights violator. They persecute minorities in their country.

China cannot be allowed to illegally detain and torture an American citizen and face no consequences for their unlawful acts. Hopefully, Secretary Tillerson will make freeing Sandy a top priority for this administration.

The last time Sandy's husband, Jeff, whom I have met with, was able to speak with her was way back in September of 2015. Sandy has already missed out on 2 years of her life with her loving husband and her daughter.

It is time to let Sandy go. She is not guilty of any crime. The only crime being committed is by the Chinese Government for their false imprisonment of an American citizen.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H2243

And that is just the way it is.

REPUBLICANS PUSH THROUGH THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, this week we will consider the most important bill that this House will consider in this Congress.

Every day we are hearing from more and more Republican Members of this House and of the Senate who oppose—who oppose—who oppose—the dangerous healthcare bill on the floor this week.

Just yesterday, conservative Republican Representative JUSTIN AMASH tweeted the following—a very conservative Republican from the mid-part of our country said this: “While I’ve been in Congress, I can’t recall a more universally detested piece of legislation than this GOP healthcare bill.” Or health no care bill.

This is just the most recent in a long list of statements by Republicans on the demerits—demerits—of the bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

It is interesting that they have named it the American Health Care Act. The only thing they struck from our title was “affordable.” It should tell you something about the bill. They replace it with a system that requires Americans to pay more and get less.

This bill has been rushed through the committees without a single public hearing—not one, no testimony or expert view. And when the committees marked it up, it did not have what we call a CBO score.

That is simply Washington-speak for the agency that is nonpartisan, bipartisan, with the Director appointed by the Republicans to give us the advice of the consequences of the enactment of such legislation.

They came back and told us that there would be 24 million less Americans insured by 2026. That would total 58 million uninsured Americans as a result of this bill just 9 years from now.

Republicans are rushing it to the floor for two reasons. First, they know that if the American people see what this bill would do and what it would cost, it wouldn’t pass.

As a matter of fact, we have some information on that already because, at town meeting after town meeting after town meeting that Republicans have held and Democrats have held on this bill, the overwhelming number of people that came to those town meetings said: This is a bad bill. It will hurt us. It will hurt our health care. It will hurt our families. It will hurt our children.

We are rushing this bill that was introduced just some 2½ weeks ago. It was introduced on a Monday night, late at night. It was marked up less than 36 hours later in both committees. And they were so intent on getting it marked up and speeding it along that

they held a hearing for 26 hours straight. Excuse me. It was not a hearing. No witnesses. They just held a markup for 26 hours straight.

Now, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that millions of Americans were awake at 4 a.m. in the morning to see what the committee was doing. Obviously, I am not sure of that at all. Perhaps that was the strategy.

Now that the CBO score which I just related to you has been released, we know the harm that this bill will bring. As I said, 24 million Americans kicked off their insurance, including 7 million Americans who are currently covered under plans provided by their employers, premiums for individual policyholders rising 24 to 29 percent.

This is not my view. This is the Congressional Budget Office, whose Director was appointed by this Republican Congress. His predecessor, Dr. Elmendorf, testified in a hearing that we held, because Republicans refused to hold a hearing on this bill, and he agreed with the Republican-appointed Director and Congressional Budget Office.

So you have a bipartisan agreement that this bill will harm Americans—and not just those 24 million Americans. It will harm all Americans because their premiums and copays and deductibles will go up. States will be forced to drop 14 million Americans from Medicaid—and I understand there is a manager’s amendment that is going to make it worse—while cutting benefits and provider payments.

A less fiscally sustainable future for Medicare, they shorten the life of Medicare’s fiscal sustainability by 3 years, from 2028 down to 2025.

The list goes on, Mr. Speaker, of the reasons why this bill would be a disaster for families in our country.

The second reason they pushed the bill through so quickly is because they wanted to bring it to the floor this week—not next week, not the week after, not after thorough consideration, not after hearings, not after listening to the American people, but this week.

Why this week? Because this week marks the seventh anniversary of the enactment of the law they are seeking to repeal, in other words, optics, spin, propaganda, message. That is what their timeline and their bill are all about: messaging—not results, not reform, political messaging.

This is the fulfillment of a campaign pledge based on a premise that is no longer sustainable. Seven years after the law’s enactment the facts are clear. It has expanded coverage, improved benefits, banned discrimination against women and people with pre-existing conditions and disabilities, and prohibited annual and lifetime limits on coverage.

Now, they keep some of those things in their bill because they were so popular they thought they couldn’t get rid of them. But they have voted 65 times to repeal all those benefits.

Is the Affordable Care Act perfect? Of course not. In the areas where it has fallen short, let’s fix it—together.

But this bill—this bill repealing the law and making Americans pay more for less—will throw our healthcare system into turmoil and put millions of families and small businesses at risk. That is why doctors oppose it. That is why hospitals oppose it. That is why senior organizations like AARP oppose it. There are literally 1,000 organizations, plus, that have opposed this legislation.

We are now hearing reports, Mr. Speaker, that Republican leaders are making secret backroom deals with individual Members in order to win their support, the kind of desperate maneuvering that shows how unpopular this bill is.

Republicans, Mr. Speaker, must remember that, as the governing majority, they will be responsible for what happens to our healthcare system under their watch. And I do not just mean this bill. I mean the lack of certainty and the turmoil that they have been creating for the Affordable Care Act market since not only Trump was elected, but since they started attacking this bill some years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican friends, for the sake of their constituents, for the sake of the children of this country, for the sake of those who are at risk because of health challenges that confront them, I urge my Republican friends to abandon this dangerous bill and instead work with us to strengthen our healthcare system for all of our citizens.

□ 1015

CONGRATULATING ROTARY CLUB OF MIAMI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Rotary Club of Miami on its 100th anniversary, which will be celebrated through the Century of Service Gala this Saturday, March 25.

The Rotary Club of Miami is the fifth oldest rotary club in Florida, and has been working around-the-clock to make positive and long-lasting contributions to our beautiful south Florida community. Through community service projects and philanthropy, this organization has helped establish several institutions that aim to assist some of the most vulnerable members of our society, including the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, the YMCA of Greater Miami, and Boys Town of Florida.

Since its inception, the Rotary Club of Miami has been headed by extraordinary individuals with a vision to make south Florida an even better place in which to live. Its first president was Dr. James Jackson, who was